weaknesses and to strengthen them to avoid recurrence of such discrepancies in future.

Commissioning of Advanced Reactor Using Thorium as Fuel

*168. SHRI SITARAM KESRI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an advanced type of heavy water reactor has been designed by the Indian scientists;

(b) if so, the extent of electrical energy using Thorium as fuel can be produced by the said reactor; and

(c) by when the proposed reactor is likely to be ready for commissioning and the cost involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 235 MWe of electrical energy.

(c) Preliminary design of the reactor and the feasibility report is at the conceptual stage. Therefore, the completion of the detailed project report will be possible only by the end of the IX Plan. As such, it may not be possible at this stage to indicate the cost estimate and the timing of the commissioning of the reactor.

Denigration of Sacred Hindu Symbols

*170. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem report appearing in the Asian Age dated. 18.11.99 regarding denigration of sacred symbols and Hindu deities in Australia by depicting them in posters of unmentionable designs; and

(b) If so, what is Government's reaction with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian High Commission had, soon after occurence, taken up the matter with the organisers, to obtain an apology as also to ensuring removal of the offending posters from the Web Gallery. The

High Commission also contacted the Australian Government. As a result of these efforts, a written apology has been tendered by the organisers to the Hindu Council of Australia and all posters have been removed.

Cotton production in Gujarat

*172. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will- the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a record production of cotton this year, particularly, in Gujarat;

(b) whether Government are purchasing all the cotton brought by farmers in mandis at the support price; and

(c) what other measures have been taken to ensure that farmers do not suffer losses on account of higher production?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) The production of cotton during last three years at All India level and also in Gujarat is given as under:—

(Production in lakh bales of 170 kgs each)

Year	Gujarat	All India
1997-98	31.80	108.51
1998-99	39.35	121.77
1999-2000 (Advance Estimates)	26.32	125.20

(b) The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has been made nodal agency to procure entire cotton offered by farmers under the Price Support Scheme. CCI intervenes when the market prices touch Minimum Support Prices declared by the Government.

I To ensure that farmers do not suffer loss, rather get remunerative prices, the Government of India has taken following steps:—

(ii) The Government of India fixes MSP for two varieties of cotton